

AURA
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DISCLOSURE AUSTRALIA

NEWSLETTER TWENTY-SEVEN JUNE 2006

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PO Box 738

JIMBOOMBA, 4280

e-mail: disclosureaustralia@yahoo.com.au

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What really happened at Westall, Victoria in 1966?

An incident which occurred on 6 April 1966 at Westall, a Melbourne suburb, has long intrigued Australian UFO researchers.

A report appeared at that time which described a dazzling, silver object flying around, "hovering" then "descending" behind some trees near a school. When the object was out of sight several private aircraft were reported flying towards these trees. The UFO then re-appeared and rose to the level of the approaching aircraft. The UFO was described as lengthy as a Cessna aircraft, but very thin. As the aircraft approached the UFO tilted at a 45 degree angle and started to move into the distance, gradually gaining height. The aircraft increased their speed and began to follow it but the object streaked away. It was later said that ground traces were found nearby, and that uniformed men, possibly RAAF attended the scene.

Recently, Shane Ryan of Canberra has lead a re-investigation of the event and he has established, and partly moderates, an excellent online Yahoo group about this event at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Westallhighschoolufo>. A number of original witnesses have surfaced and the group is conducting some retrospective research into the nature of the incident.

A question arose as to the existence or otherwise of Federal Government documents on this incident. A search through the known RAAF UFO policy (554/30/1 series) and sightings files (580/1/1 series) of that era failed to locate any such paperwork. Likewise, no relevant documents could be found in RecordSearch on the NAA web site, from any other Government agency.

Two, completely opposite, conclusions could be drawn from this lack of visible Government documentation of what, at first, appears a classic UFO case. Firstly, that the incident was so secret that papers about it never made it to the UFO files. Secondly, that the event did not involve a UFO and so there was no reason it should be found on the UFO files. UFOlogists argue for the former possibility; others are not so sure.

If it wasn't an incident involving a UFO what could be the nature of the event? Taking the original report and the forty year later recollections of original witnesses, a few suggestions come to mind including:

A conventional aircraft incident â€“ e.g. a "fuel dumping" from an aircraft in difficulty (Shaun Matthews, apparently one of the closest witnesses, cited in the Melbourne Age newspaper in 2005, mentions a silvery object with a "sort of purple hue to it")

A "secret" aircraft incident â€“ (USAF U2,s were based at nearby Laverton RAAF base in early 1966)

A satellite re-entry

A balloon incident.

A NAA RecordSearch using various keywords failed to reveal any directly relevant files. However, the following leads are being pursued:

B94 33/Air/7/Part 1 titled "Crash of USAF aircraft." Laverton RAAF base. The date range of the file is 19 Sep 1962 to 5 Nov 1965 and therefore shouldn't have any relevance to Westall. However, an examination of this file may reveal how the crash was handled; who attended; who investigated, and was it kept a secret at the time?

A1533 1956/2626 Part 2 titled "Incidents, bombs and hoaxes-other than aircraft." This is a Commonwealth Police file covering the year 1966.

The Project would be interested to hear from anyone who is aware of any official documentation on this incident; or who has further personal knowledge of the events of that day.

Minister of Defence replies

In Newsletter 25, the Project advised that it had posed a number of questions about the Australian Government,s involvement in the UFO phenomenon, to the Minister of Defence. A reply has been received and in essence the Minister confirmed to us that the Australian Government never undertook any scientific research into the UFO phenomena. Also, he confirmed that the current Department of Defence does not investigate UFOs.

File A703 569/5/451

"Representations on behalf of Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigations Organisation re Unidentified Flying Objects in Australia" (file A703 569/5/451) has been digitised by the NAA and is available through their web site.

This digitised file contains 67 images, and is concerned with correspondence between various people in the Australian Government and the Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigations Organisation (CAPIO).

CAPIO which represented a collective of Australian UFO groups in that era was lead by Peter Norris, a Melbourne lawyer. CAPIO lobbied the Government to fund a scientific investigation into the UFO phenomenon, along the lines of the US University of Colorado (the so called "Condon study," named after the lead scientist involved in a USAF funded review of the evidence at that time (1966-1968.))

The RAAF,s view on the CAPIO request was expressed in a Department of Air minute dated 16 Mar 1967 which read in part "As you are aware the RAAF,s prime concern in the investigation of UFOs is to ascertain whether any report suggests a possible threat to Australia from the air. Provided we can retain this prerogative we have no objection to the Government giving official and financial backing to some organisation which would like to delve more deeply into the UFO question. However this Directorate obviously cannot decide the Government,s policy on this matter."

Ultimately, the Government advised CAPIO that "The Government is satisfied that our national interests are being adequately served with these arrangements and that no advantage would accrue at this time in providing financial assistance from Commonwealth funds to any other agency for the purpose of carrying out research or investigations into unidentified objects." The "these arrangements" referred to the current system of the RAAF looking at UFO reports.

A further Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) file turns up

Previously unknown file B595 21/1/387 Part 2 was recently located in the NAA Canberra and is simply titled "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." Its status is shown as "not yet examined," so a copy is currently unavailable. The date range is 1962-1965. A request has been submitted to have it examined and released to us. For new readers Newsletter 17 carried a comprehensive review of the involvement of DCA in the Australian UFO phenomenon.

RAAF UFO sightings files

The RAAF had a series of files which carried details of UFO reports made to them. Thirty five parts of this file (A703 580/1/1) are known. Parts 1 to 29 and 32 have been released, and examined by the Project. Parts 30,31,33-35 are yet to be examined by the NAA. The Project has prepared listings of all the reports so far released.

How many UFO files?

A frequent question asked of the Project, is just how many Australian Government UFO files have been uncovered so far? The current number is 103. Summaries of almost all of these have been prepared and made available on the Project's CD-rom.

Department of Navy file

When a Department of Navy file title mentioning UFOs is located, curiosity is aroused. What was the Navy's interest in UFOs? Long term readers might recall Navy files MP926/1 3079/101 "Unidentified Objects (Flying saucers sighted by Navy Pilot over Goulburn)" and SP338/3 13/4/10 "Unidentified objects (Flying-report of.*)" which were described back in Newsletter 4.

File A6826 1361/1/1-3 is a Department of Navy file titled "Earth Satellites, space vehicles, Unidentified Flying Objects-general" and has been digitised by the NAA. It is however only three pages long. These pages consist of a cover sheet and a two page summary sheet. No actual papers are on the file. The only UFO related item on the summary sheet is "Reported sighting of falling object, Territory of Papua and New Guinea 24 May 1959, with a reference of 128.1.21(20).

Dom's talk at May 2006 conference

At the recent Sydney UFO conference, Dominic McNamara gave a updated presentation on Disclosure Australia. His talk started with a coverage of the types of material which the Project has obtained from the National Archives. He then spoke about the types of UFO reports which had been uncovered in the archived material.

Uncovering written material was the focus of the first part of the Project which then moved on to also locating still alive witnesses. On behalf of the Project, Dom has interviewed Harry Turner, former Government Joint Intelligence Bureau employee, and Elizabeth May who was previously a tracking camera operator at Woomera.

Project website change

Visit the Project's new website location at:

<http://disclosure.freewebspages.org>

Change your "favourites" if you've previously added the old website.

Project secretariat

The driving force behind the Disclosure Australia Project remains the Australian UFO Research Association (AURA) which acts as the project's Secretariat. Contact details for the project are:

AURA carries out other research work besides being the Project,s Secretariat and may be contacted at:

E-mail auraaustralia@yahoo.com.au

Snail mail PO Box 786, North Adelaide South Australia 5006.

There have been a number of changes to AURA personnel, with Debbie, Helen, Alex and Colin standing down for a variety of reasons, leaving Dom, Jeff, and Kathy as active members. In addition, Keith has just returned from an absence of leave and is compiling and distributing the Project newsletter.

Â Contacting the Project

DISCLOSURE AUSTRALIA

PO Box 783

Jimboomba 4280

e-mail: disclosureaustralia@yahoo.com.au
